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# UTILITY OF BATHING.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

We read of the fabled ages of gold, silver and iron. Ours is the age of *water*. This is the theme in city and country. Cold, pure, soft water, the universal solvent, the best drink for man and beast, the great promoter of cleanliness, health and happiness.

It is not designed in this article to speak particularly of *Hydropathy*, as it is generally understood, nor of the benefit of *Cold Water Armies*, how good and valuable soever they may be in their places. The special object of the writer is to speak, as a physician, of the utility of *the Bath*, as conducing to the comfort, health and happiness of man, and as a preventive and remedy of disease.

The skin, which is the covering of the body, has been considered its "fundamental organ" by some eminent physicians. All acknowledge the importance of cleanliness, but few know the *sympathy* between the skin and the internal viscera. There is an intimate sympathy between the skin and the lungs. This is often seen in the case of those persons who are troubled with a severe cough during the cold season of the year, and who are free from it in the warm season when the perspiration from the skin is profuse. The first effect of external impressions from the atmosphere is on the skin and lungs. We are unable fully to explain this sympathetic effect between the skin and lungs and other viscera. But that such a sympathetic action takes place between these organs, is demonstrated in the cold bath. When the body is immersed in water of a temperature considerably below that of the body in its natural state, the vessels on the skin are rendered torpid, and the blood is thrown upon the internal organs. At the same time, a sympathetic torpor takes place in the capillary vessels of the lungs, which occasions the *panting* for breath experienced upon suddenly entering the cold bath. But reaction soon takes place, and the functions of the skin are renewed with increased energy. This is but a repetition of what takes place in sudden atmospherical changes. In our climate, proverbial for its sudden changes, the *lungs* are the organs which suffer most. The delicate and feeble, especially females who usually go lightly dressed, suffer more than others from aerial vicissitudes operating upon the lungs through the medium of the skin. I should in this place say more about *diseases of the lungs* (of which I have personally had some experience), did I not design to speak more at large on *pulmonary consumption*, should opportunity present, at a future time. My object at present is to show only the connection between the skin and the lungs, as preparatory to what may be said about bathing. There is also an intimate sympathy between the skin and stomach, kidneys and liver. But this will not now be considered.

In the greater part of the derangements of the lungs and other viscera, we shall find the functions of the skin first impaired. The insensible, and even the sensible, perspiration is checked. The balance of the circulation is deranged. Hence the chills and flushes which alternately succeed each other. Here commence the slight effects of pulmonary difficulties, and these troubles are in proportion to the violence of the atmospherical influence upon these organs, through their sympathy with the skin. This point being settled, we can readily see the course of relief pointed out, and the remedial measures to be pursued. *It is to restore the proper functions of the skin.* This may often be accomplished by various kinds of bathing, but the judicious use of the bath exerts its most salutary effects in *preserving* these functions. It is often a remedy for disease, but it is more than a *remedy* for disease by *preventing* it, inasmuch as, according to the old proverb, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and as, he is a greater surgeon who *saves* limbs than he who *cuts them off*. Upon this principle, it is said, the Chinese pay their physicians so long as they themselves are in health, but take away their salaries as soon as they are sick. Many of the most grave diseases which "flesh is heir to" are cutaneous, and would never exist were proper measures employed to cleanse and purify the skin. The truthfulness of this maxim undoubtedly led the Jewish Lawgiver and the Arabian Prophet to prescribe so many ablutions in their canons. It is not intended by this remark to place the writings of Moses and Mahomet upon the same footing, but, simply, that in their frequent purifications of the surface of the body, both of them prescribed a course, and made compliance with it a religious duty, which was calculated to promote the health, happiness and longevity of their followers. Bathing was much practised by the ancient Greeks and Romans. They expended vast sums of money, not from the coffers of individuals only, but also from the public chest, in erecting stupendous and beautiful baths. These, at the present time, like all the other works of art in those countries, are in ruins. Still, the ocean, lakes and rivers supply their places.

It is not simply in reference to *cleanliness* that I would call the attention of the public to the bath, but as the means of *preventing* and *removing* disease. I suspect the bath is in much more frequent use in this country now than it was a quarter of a century since. But its use at the present time is little in comparison with what it is in the Eastern world. According to modern physicians and others who have travelled in Asia and the northern parts of Europe, baths are frequently used at the present time. One of the most eminent physicians of modern times says, "It is a mistake to suppose that it is only in a hot climate, where the perspiration is abundant, that the cleanliness of ablutions is necessary. In the wilds of Russia the peasant steams himself in a hot vapor, and then rolls himself in snow. By early inuring himself to these transitions, he preserves health to old age, and seldom requires medicine."

No one can study and understand the proper functions of the skin and the sympathetic influence exerted by it upon the internal organs, without realizing the truth of what is said above relative to the effects of the bath in preventing and curing disease. It is, beyond doubt, the best preventive of disease known, when properly used, and it certainly exerts no inconsiderable influence in removing disease. But it should never be resorted to by the invalid without the advice of an experienced and judicious physician. I mean, when there is the slightest probability that any of the internal organs are diseased, or greatly debilitated. I have known both the cold and warm bath prove highly injurious to invalids. I think it would not be too much to say, I have known them convert slight diseases, and those which might have been remedied by proper treatment, into grave and incurable ones, especially the *cold* bath, when used improperly and indiscriminately. To point out *when* bathing may be employed with safety and utility, is one important object of this essay.

The *cold bath*—when may it be safely and usefully employed? This question may be the most properly answered by the effects which its use produces.

It may be used by *sponging* a part or the whole surface of the body, and wiping and rubbing the skin, first with a soft napkin, and then with a coarser one, or with a brush, or with the hand, which some consider the best flesh brush. This manner of using the cold bath is generally safe, if commenced in the warm season. In the case of those who are feeble, it is the best and safest way of applying cold water to the surface of the body.

A *second* method of using the cold bath is by *immersing*, or *plunging* the whole body into the water. This produces a greater shock to the system than *sponging* the body. The blood is suddenly driven from the extremities and capillaries of the skin, and thrown upon the large vessels and trunks of the interior.

A *third* method is by *showering* or *affusion*. In this, also, the shock is greater than in *sponging*, and may exceed that of plunging if the amount of water used is considerable and descends from the height of a number of feet.

These *three* are the usual methods in which the cold bath is administered. In all of them the effect is similar in kind, though it may vary in degree. The shock given to the system produces a *reaction* in proportion to the strength and vigor of the constitution. The collapse of the capillary vessels is soon overcome by the power of the heart and arteries, and a general *warmth* and *glow* of the whole system succeed, which is both pleasant and salutary. A new and more vigorous impulse is given to the perspiratory vessels of the skin and glandular organs, The excretory vessels are roused to renewed action and the whole system is invigorated, which is evinced by a sense of elasticity, flow of spirits and pleasing sensations.

If this reaction takes place soon after the bath, it is the best indication of its beneficial effects. If a gentle glow or warmth ***immediately*** succeeds the shock of the bath, it is a sure proof of its utility; but if the reaction is slow in taking place, it is of doubtful benefit; and if it does not follow the bath at all, it is proof that the use of it, instead of having a salutary effect, is hurtful and dangerous. I have known instances where the bath has been persisted in for some time, when, instead of a *glow*, it was followed by a chill, and it was ruinous to the constitution. No person should use the cold bath, when, after bathing, it leaves the system cold or chilly. If there is any organic disease of the large viscera, such as the heart, liver or spleen, or functional derangement of the heart, it will be injurious or dangerous to use it; and, as this may be the case while the invalid himself knows it not, he should never use the bath until he has been carefully examined by a skilful physician. The seat and cause of the disease should be thoroughly explored, and the chest and abdomen examined by percussion, compression and auscultation, and all the physical signs of visceral disease strictly scrutinized, before he is advised to resort to sea-bathing or to the use of the cold bath in any of its forms. I cannot too strictly enjoin upon the invalid the absolute necessity of consulting his physician before he ventures upon an experiment on which his future health or life may be so dependent.

It is a good way for the invalid to commence with the tepid bath, and gradually lower its temperature, if its effects do not prove injurious, until it be of the coldness of the atmosphere.

The cold sea-water bath, or salt dissolved in the water, is always preferable to fresh water. This seems to depend on the stimulus of the salt upon the skin.

I do not think the greatest benefit of the cold bath is to be found in its proving a remedy for disease, though as such it is highly valuable. It is in *preventing* disease that its worth is pre-eminently seen. If commenced in infancy, almost any child may be inured to its use, and its constitution so tempered as to be but little affected by atmospherical vicissitudes. If commenced at adult age, before disease has begun its ravages, or the constitution is greatly undermined, any one may so far harden himself to our climate that its sudden changes will do him but little injury. I consider the cold bath, if commenced early, and properly administered, as the greatest safeguard against the various diseases of our climate with which we are acquainted. If it be true, as has been said, of the Aborigines of this country, that they immerse their newly-born infants in cold water, it is, to say the least, not a very unwise or injudicious practice. No person can live in our climate without exposure to its vicissitudes, and there is no guard so effectual as the use of cold water in some way applied to the surface of the body. As a *remedy* in certain diseases it is invaluable; such as smallpox, scarlet fever, measles and other rashes. In all these we may wash the skin freely with cold water, from the commencement to the close of the disease. It is thus rendered soft, the acrid matter passes off more freely through the pores, and the fever is abated. In smallpox the cold sea-bathing has been found highly salutary. Dr. Eberle, in his Practice of Medicine, on scarlet fever says, "The application of cold water to the surface of the body cannot be too strongly recommended in the higher grades of this affection." And he quotes the following passage from Bateman. "'As far as my experience has taught me, we are possessed of no physical agent, by which the functions of the animal economy are controlled with so much certainty, safety and promptitude, as by the application of cold water to the skin, under the augmented heat of scarlatina and of some other fevers. This expedient combines in itself all the medicinal properties which are indicated in this state of disease, and which we should scarcely expect it to possess, for it is not only the most effectual *febrifuge*, but it is in fact the only *sudorific* or *anodyne* which will not disappoint the expectation of the practitioner.'" "I have had the satisfaction, in numerous instances, of witnessing the immediate improvement of the symptoms and the rapid change of countenance produced in the patient by washing the skin."

I now proceed to make some remarks upon the *warm bath.* Says the distinguished writer before named, "As the first instance of cold bathing, *as a remedy*, was that of Melampus bathing the daughter of the king of Argos; so Medea's cauldron is supposed to be the first record of the warm bath. From the derivation of the word, 'care destroyer,' and the fabulous stories of old age restored to youth by the effects of Medea's boiler, we may suppose that the *warm* bath was highly appreciated in ancient times." I have no doubt that a general use of the warm bath in our country would produce the most salutary and desirable effects upon the health and longevity of its inhabitants. The time will come when a change "so devoutly to be wished" will take place, and the bath be generally used. There are, at present, many objections which are utterly unfounded, but which must, nevertheless, be removed, before this desirable era will dawn upon us with its blessings.

It is objected to the *warm* bath, that it renders persons *effeminate and debilitated.* This is proved to be an erroneous opinion, from the fact that in those Southern and Eastern countries where it is in general use, the inhabitants are healthy and live to a good old age. That the *warm* bath, like every other good thing, may be so abused; carried to such a pitch of excess, luxury and extravagance, as to prove deleterious, there can be no doubt. That it was carried to this extent among the Romans, is readily granted. But it was when they were luxurious in everything—when vice of every kind so abounded, that *even the use of the bath, salutary as it is*, could not save them. Then (as Music, the daughter of heaven, when she has been exiled from her proper place, has been made to serve the purposes of Satan), the bath was made subservient to their sensuality and effeminacy. What good thing may not be abused? When used with moderation, it neither *debilitates* nor tends to promote effeminacy. In debilitated subjects, it strengthens the system and is much safer than the cold bath. It has already been said that the *cold* bath is improper and dangerous in many diseases. Not so, the *warm.* Its effects are the reverse of the cold. It elicits the blood to the surface, causing it to fill the whole cutaneous system, and thus relieving the internal organs. It is very salutary after exhaustion. It improves the pulse, elevates the spirits and increases the appetite.

As a *remedy* for disease, it is far preferable to the cold bath, but not as a *preventive.* It may be employed with safety in a far more numerous class of diseases than the cold bath. I have known it relieve, or greatly mitigate, among others, the following diseases: scrofula, indolent swellings of the joints or lymphatic glands, gout, incipient consumption, chronic obstructions of the liver and other viscera, old syphilitic difficulties, stone, inflammation of the bowels, and the whole host of cutaneous diseases, numerous as they are. A judicious use of the warm bath in the relief of diseases cannot be too highly appreciated.

To those who are not specially diseased, it is one of the great luxuries of life, and as such, it has ever been esteemed in the Eastern world. Homer tells us that Ulysses refreshed himself with the warm bath when he had returned home from his toils and wars. It may be administered at any time, but promotes perspiration the most when taken in the evening. It may be taken to good advantage, when the person can retire immediately after it to bed. I think this the best time to receive the warm bath. If it be taken at any hour of the day, it should be followed by gentle exercise for an hour or more. There are various kinds of baths now administered, such as the Russian vapor, medicated, sulphur, iodine, &c. All these, when judiciously and properly used, may be serviceable and worthy of the attention of the valetudinarian or invalid.

Every person must see the great utility of purifying the skin, when the amount of perspirable matter which passes through its pores is duly understood, and the sympathy between that and the internal viscera fully appreciated. This sympathy has been glanced at in the former part of this essay. Lavoisier, a celebrated French chemist, and many others, have estimated the exhalations from the skin alone to be about two thirds of the whole amount of meats and drinks taken into the system. How powerful, then, must be the free perspiration from this covering of the body, to preserve the whole internal structure in health; and what a potent energy is it capable of exerting in relieving disease and restoring the deranged and disordered functions of the whole animal economy!

Since writing the preceding pages, I have been highly gratified to see in print the following remarks from one to whose instructions I have listened with great pleasure, and not, I trust, without some profit, viz., one of the Professors in the Medical School of Harvard University. "The daily washing of the body serves to remove the cuticle, which is constantly forming on the surface of the skin, and thus purifies it, and leaves its pores open for the discharge of those fluids which the preservation of the health requires. Another great advantage is, that the sudden application of cold in this mode to the surface of the body produces a bracing effect on the internal organs, particularly those of digestion."

The above quotation is here inserted, because it comes from a gentleman well known in the community, venerable for age and experience, and who has long stood at the head of his profession; though it is presumed that in it, he has spoken only the feelings and views of his brethren generally in the medical profession.

## ON THE USE OF LARGE DOSES OF QUININE.

**To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.**

Sir,—Allow me to trouble you with a few remarks in reference to a paper on the "*Use and Abuse of Medicine*," which appeared in the last two Nos. of your Journal, purporting to have been communicated by the Medical Department of the National Institute. As the tone of this paper might possibly lead to the misapprehension, on the part of some of your readers, that the strictures of the 'parental Helios' were really deserved, I deem it but just to myself, and to those whom I had the honor to represent on the occasion which drew forth the *critique* in question, to ask for an arrest of judgment in the case until the "other side" shall have been heard.

In compliance with a request to that effect, I presented to the National Institute, at its last meeting, a communication which contained, by permission of the Surgeon General of the Army, a *résumé* of the experience of a number of the officers of the Medical Staff in the employment of the sulphate of quinine in the malarial fevers of Florida and the South-west, which seemed to warrant the use of this remedy in a manner somewhat different from the practice taught in the schools. I distinctly stated, at the same time, that the facts thus set forth as the results of the experience of competent observers, were given, as such, to the medical profession, and that they were intended to support no new theories, nor to sanction any novel or extravagant system of practice.

The author of the article above referred to, deemed it his duty on the spot to protest a against the "novel and dangerous" ideas put forth in my essay, and to beg the audience not to consider them as sanctioned by the Medical Department of the Institute. The subject came under the notice of this respectable body shortly afterwards, and received unexpected support in the report of a committee by which it was investigated. As neither this report nor my paper has been published,[*] and your readers have seen nothing on the subject with the exception of the article on the "*Use and Abuse of Medicine*," I have thought it as well to state the most prominent points of the "*novel and dangerous*"[†] practice described in my communication to the Institute, and which were so unfortunate as to draw forth the strictures contained in the above article.

They are simply as follows:

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[*] [Dr. Van Buren's paper, above referred to, has not been forwarded for publication; and one of the reports on Dr. Buck's paper was inserted in the Journal last week, but had not been received at Washington when the above was written.—Ed.]

[†] By reference to Elliotson's Practice (American Ed. by Stewardson, p. 276, et seq.), it will be seen that there is nothing extraordinarily novel in the use of quinine as above described. Watson also (Practice of Physic, p. 416), is somewhat sarcastic in regard to Dr. Elliotson's practice in this respect. If it had fallen to the lot of the latter gentleman to have encountered some of our full-blown Florida miasmatic fevers, his views on the subject would be, very probably, different.

In the miasmatic regions of the South and South-west, and in constitutions depressed and debilitated by exposure to the miasmata, and the excessive and continued heats which characterize those regions, it has been found, by the experience of certain medical officers of the Army, that intermittent fevers have been arrested with more certainty and success, and without any bad consequences, by the exhibition of sulphate of quinine in doses of 10, 15, and 20 grains, immediately after the paroxysm of fever; that in remittent fevers, a similar mode of administration of the remedy is not merely preferable, but absolutely necessary to *cut short* the disease; that in pernicious intermittents, and that form of disease known as congestive fever, no other remedy than quinine—and not even quinine in smaller doses—will, in a majority of cases, save life; and lastly, that among the thousands of cases treated in this manner there is no observation on record of injurious effects from the remedy, other than those ordinarily experienced in the usual mode of practice, although the attention of the medical officers has been particularly directed to this point.

It is not my design to enlarge upon this subject at present. I have reason to believe that the experience of the medical officers of the Army will be given to the profession at large, in a detailed form, from the proper quarter, in the course of a few months; and I believe, moreover, that it will receive abundant confirmation at the hands of all practising physicians at the South, whose opinions are drawn from bed-side observation, and with whom *novelty* and *heresy* are not synonymous terms.

I take pleasure in adding, that I fully reciprocate the personal respect and good feeling expressed by the author of the article which has given rise to these remarks. I am, Sir, &c. &c.

Wm. H. Van Buren, M.D., U.S.A.

*Washington, D. C., May 7th*, 1845.

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF TUMORS AMONG THE CHINESE.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

Our friends from the country, who visit Boston on the coming anniversary, must not forget to look in at the room of the Society for Medical Improvement. In addition to the well-known objects of attraction contained in its cabinet, ever multiplying under the hand of its untiring guardian, a new accession has lately been made to its treasures which they will examine with the greatest interest.

Dr. Robert W. Hooper has recently presented the Society with a series of oil-paintings, twenty-eight in number, representing a great variety of cases of surgical disease, principally tumors, observed at the hospital at Canton under the care of Dr. Parker. They have been enclosed in handsome gilt frames, at the expense of some of the members of the Society, and now ornament the walls of the apartment in which its cabinet is contained. As illustrations of disease they are in the highest degree curious and instructive, and as works of art they may challenge the admiration of artists themselves. The gratitude of the Society for this very handsome gift would have naturally led to a wish that the portrait of the donor might have accompanied the other paintings—but it might have been unpleasant to our liberal friend to have been hung up on the wall as a *pendant* to a spina ventosa, or a *vis-à-vis* to a fungus hæmatodes.

These monstrous diseased growths are very serious things to our poor fellow-creatures of the Celestial empire. But they are so out of all reasonable proportions, and sprout up in such strange shapes and places—and China is so far off, and a China man is so much of an abstraction to our minds—and the almond-shaped eyes, the pigtail, the brown-sherry complexion and the Oriental environments of the sufferers, so blind us to the naked fact of the existence of an unsightly or devouring malady, that we cannot help looking at them with a little twitching about the *levator anguli oris*, which if not inhuman is at least highly unbecoming.

The truth is, the practised eye kindles at the sight of any *very* remarkable excrescence, as the traveller's does at that of lofty mountains or colossal edifices. The pathological sublime and beautiful is so tamed down by the science of highly civilized countries, that the grander and more captivating efforts of nature in that department must be looked for among ruder people. We nip the most promising growths of disease in the bud. Morbid products stand no better chance among the surgeons, than apples in a school-house yard; they are all picked off long before they are ripe. The largest specimens of our European and Anglo-American cabinets merely show the infancy of the species to which they belong. Science takes her daily walk through her hospitals and cuts the last night's growths, like so many shoots of asparagus, in their very greenest immaturity.

Not so in the pathological Eden of the Flowery Land.

> "Nature here
> Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will
> Her virgin fancies."——

The first opening of the Chinese Hospital was to the worshipper of morbid nature what penetrating a Brazilian forest was to the botanist who first explored its depths. The enormities of Asiatic hypertrophy put his most extravagant steatomas and osteo-sarcomas to the blush. The Mongol has beaten us in the microcosm as well as in the macrocosm: Chimborazo knocked under to Chumularee long since, and here is a show of tumors before the least of which the pride of Guy's is as a wart and the glory of Bartholomew's as a bunion!

If it could hurt the feelings of poor Ching foo and the rest of them the least atom in the world to know that we had spoken of their misfortunes in a tone which might be considered as approaching to levity, we would make a crucial mark from corner to corner of the above paragraph. But inasmuch as *our* feelings have never been hurt by any unkind remarks which may have been conveyed in the inscriptions on the heads of tea-chests, and as we have never lost a night's sleep on account of any slurs upon the profession contained in the lines upon *Mr. Burnett's Chinese Gallipots* (which we thus mention to our readers by way of what Laennec called the "souffle voilé" or *veiled puff)*, so do we trust that they will not be grieved by anything they may happen to see in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

It is really an instructive sight to see what a bad business Chinese Grahamism and the *vis medicatrix* together make of it with these poor creatures. And it is truly gratifying to know that after Nature has deformed them with such hideous additions, making *China monsters* of them, sure enough, a kind and skilful hand has reached them in their misery, and divorced them from these horrible incumbrances.

Our friends who dine with us, and are always in such a hurry for the afternoon cars, must not forget to see these pictures and the cabinet. They had better give up the nuts and raisins than not see them. Indeed, if the question were between giving up the pictures or the pudding itself, we would sacrifice the latter—unless of a higher order than we have a right to expect it will be. We shall never forget the enthusiastic friend who actually left the table last year *previous to the pig*, for the sake of inspecting the specimens at the Society's room. His dinner was of course in quite a rudimentary state at this period of the entertainment; in fact it was only in consequence of having pocketed five oranges, two slices of *Mrs. Nichols*, all the ornamental claws of a very leggy lobster, a handful of Sultana raisins, and a bunch of flowers that would have been of no use to any body, that he remembered, when he reached home, of having been at the table at all. He assured us, however, that he had been more than compensated for his sacrifice, though his wife and children thought the dinner was not quite up to their reasonable expectations.

*Boston, May 15th*, 1845.

## TOPOGRAPHICAL REPORT OF BALASORE, INDIA.

[The following minute topographical account of a district in India, will be found interesting to the physician as well as to the general reader. Some of the terms used convey but little meaning to an American ear, but the most obscure of them we have omitted, and have otherwise abbreviated the article, which we copy from a late No. of the India Medical Journal. It is drawn up by Assistant Surgeon W. S. Dicken, of the British Army.]

Balasore is a town in the province of Orissa, situated in latitude 21-26 north; longitude, 87 east. The district is about 80 miles long and 40 broad.

The nearest point to the sea is Balumghurri, distant about 8 miles. It was here that many Europeans fled for shelter, when Calcutta was captured by Surajud Dowlah, A. D. 1756; the remains of houses are still visible.

Balasore is 28 feet above the level of the sea; the travelling distance from Calcutta 140 miles. The communication for trade for five months in the year is carried on by land, and the remaining seven months (from September to March inclusive) principally by water. The Borabullery river, which takes its rise in a range of hills bordering on Chota Nagpore, runs through the station; it is a mountain stream until within a few miles of Balasore, when it becomes a tide river: it is accessible only to vessels under 120 tons, owing to the sand banks that obstruct its entrance and the shallowness of the beach. Ships of large size are obliged to anchor at least 5 miles from the shore, and smaller craft, above 120 tons, can enter the river at spring tides only, when the rise at Balasore is generally 10½ feet, and the tide flows 6 or 7 miles above it. During the rains fresh water may be met with 2 miles from the mouth of the river, which is very rapid and tortuous in its course, being nearly 20 miles from Balasore to its confluence with the sea. The banks are low, muddy, and covered with a dense jungle, in some places underwood, in others a sedgy coarse grass. Considerable deposits are left at each recession of the tide, but these are again generally removed at the return of high water. The river abounds with numerous kinds of fish, and the wily alligator is always to be seen basking on its banks. The water is good, and used by the natives for culinary purposes.

The other rivers in the district are the Subunrekah, Byterini, Jumrai and Julkai. There are besides some small streams in the district, not deserving the name of rivers, over which are curious old bridges; the artists, whoever they were, whether Hindoos or Mohammedans, were ignorant of the method of constructing an arch. They are built of stones placed horizontally and projecting beyond each other until they meet nearly to a point at the top, over which a cross stone is put. Owing to the frequently rapid rise of the rivers during the rains, the country would be inundated were it not for the bunds or embankments of earth made to confine them to their proper channels; these embankments are raised and kept in repair at the expense of government. It is in contemplation, however, to do away with many of them, as it is found that to suit the convenience of Zemindars, they are erected immediately across the stream with a view of throwing the water out of the bed of the river over their own property for the purpose of irrigation.

Both in the town and neighborhood of Balasore are numerous excellent wells and tanks; a scarcity of water is rarely felt; at a distance of thirty feet from the surface good water may be met with in any direction. From the light nature of the soil, the expense of sinking wells is trifling; they are made by lowering rings of baked clay one above the other, and filling the intervening space with earth well beaten in; these rings are made about six inches deep, and the sides one and a half thick—if the rings are well baked they last for many years.

Between Balasore and the sea are numerous low spots that are complete morasses for several months in the year; these are overgrown with short jungle and a coarse kind of grass used by the salt manufacturers for boiling the salt. The sea-beach is sandy, firm, and beautiful, and covered with a creeping convolvulus which bears for several months in the year a pretty lilac flower; the beach is low, and offers no resistance to the encroaching tide, in consequence of which a considerable portion of the country is inundated; but this, except under peculiar circumstances (the freshes) is confined to the channels it has formed for itself. On the banks of the river there are upwards of twenty mud docks for building and repairing vessels; many sloops are built every year, principally for the conveyance of salt, rice, &c. The trade in calicoes, muslins, and cloth pieces, was formerly very considerable here—the muslins were beautifully manufactured, and the cloth pieces very fine; little, however, is now done, and what is made is used in the district, hardly any being exported. Maldive vessels frequently came to Balasore, bringing large quantities of cowries, tortoise-shell, &c., but latterly the trade has dwindled to nothing, vessels seldom arriving. The average import of cowries for the last four years does not exceed 9000 nahons.

The Neelgiri mountains, or rather hills, stretching from north-east to south-south-west, vary in height from 800 to 1200 feet; the nearest is about 19 miles from the sea, and appears bold and precipitous; in clear weather it may be seen at a distance of several miles, and is a good landmark for vessels bound here. The hills are composed principally of fine white or grayish granite, and are covered almost to the summit with forest trees and jungle: they are at all times a beautiful object. Rocks of iron clay or laterite also abound, found principally at the foot of the hills, and in some places extending for miles into the plains. Near the top of the highest rock are two or three detached fragments held sacred by the superstitious natives, to which on particular days they resort to invoke aid and protection; there are also some marks on the solid granite resembling the foot of a cow, which miraculous spots are considered holy and not fit to be trodden on. Some of the hills are insulated and rise abruptly from the plains to a height of 200 or 300 feet—all are thickly wooded. In the Mohurbunge and southern part of the district, stone plates are manufactured in large quantities for culinary purposes; a few are exported. For the purposes of building, this stone would be found invaluable, and during the rains might, no doubt, be brought down some of the mountain streams on floats at a trifling cost.

The climate of Balasore may on the whole be said to be a pleasant one: from November to the end of January the prevailing winds are north-west; February and March changeable, south-east to north-east and east; April to September south-south-west to south-east; October variable, from north-east to east. The thermometer in the hottest season seldom rises above 94, and frequently during a north-wester falls 15 or 20 degrees; the nights are at all times cool and refreshing.

The following table shows the highest and lowest range of the thermometer for twelve months, the thermometer suspended in a south room, and the rates taken at 2, P. M., daily, doors and windows always open.

| | Max. | Min. | | Max. | Min. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January - - - | 79 | 72 | July - - - - - | 89½ | 83 |
| February - - - | 88 | 77 | August - - - - - | 87 | 82 |
| March - - - | 87 | 84 | September - - | 87 | 83 |
| April - - - | 88 | 83 | October - - - | 86 | 79 |
| May - - - - - | 98 | 87 | November - - - | 87 | 84 |
| June - - - - - | 96 | 83½ | December - - | 88 | 73 |

The rains commence about the 12th or 15th of June, and terminate in the middle of October; soon after which the wind blows from the north and north-east, and the weather becomes exceedingly pleasant. The cold season is particularly fine and bracing, with a clear atmosphere, fogs seldom occurring; rain is generally expected for two or three days about the middle of December and January. The temperature by the sea side in the hot weather is always six or eight degrees less than at Balasore, and affords a delightful retreat for the invalid. The morning and evening breeze, even in the months of May and June, is invigorating, and the day is never so hot as to require the doors being shut, or the use of a punkah. As a place of resort, however, for those at a distance, I fear it cannot be recommended, for with all its advantages it has those of an opposite nature. The coast, from the end of March to the middle of June, is almost inaccessible for vessels, and even boats, from the violence of the wind and surf; added to this, at every change of the moon, whether new or full, a hurricane is to be feared, and those who have taken up their quarters on the beach are glad to return to Balasore and seek shelter in more substantial abodes; were it not for this drawback, I know of no place so bearable, and I may truly say so delightful in the hot season, as the sea-beach at Balumghurri. From all quarters (Calcutta and elsewhere) we hear of the heat being excessive, whilst we of an evening are glad to muffle in cloaks and coats, actually to keep warm.

Hurricanes have been more thought of and dreaded, since the terrible ones that occurred here in 1831 and 32, when the whole country for many miles on the sea-coast was inundated, and in this district alone upwards of 20,000 lives were lost, and more than 50,000 head of cattle. It commenced from the N. N. E., and blew from every point of the compass before it terminated; no houses, except those pukha built, were left standing. The whole district suffered more or less; the damage to property and loss of life was enormous. Mr. Ricketts, at that time magistrate and collector here, made a circuit of the district immediately after the first storm, and the names of more than 20,000 were registered as having perished. The sea rose 22 feet above the highest spring tides, and flowed almost close to the town: the accounts from those who witnessed it would lead one to suppose that it must have been caused by some violent convulsion of nature. It is asserted that the whole country was deluged by two successive waves that carried everything before them. It is quite certain that the rise of the sea was astonishingly quick, and this without any bund or embankment having given way to account for it. Its retreat was equally expeditious; many a poor wretch was overwhelmed ere he could reach high ground or even ascend a tree. Dead bodies of men, women and children were found, after the storm, interspersed with those of wild beasts, birds and bullocks. The wind blew at times with great violence; sturdy trees that had borne the blast for many a long day were up-rooted; pillars erected hundreds of years since were levelled with the ground; two of the pukha walls surrounding the jail were blown in, and one out, and removed three and four feet from where they stood; an iron suspension bridge was blown from its moorings and carried several feet against the stream. The weather for two or three days previous to the gale looked cloudy and threatening; the morning after the storm was clear, and the weather beautiful. The country looked as if it had been burnt up; every bush and blade of grass was blasted. The distress and difficulties occasioned by the first storm were scarcely surmounted, when a second occurred and involved the natives in misery and destitution; they are but now recovering themselves, and again cultivating lands that have lain fallow ever since. The May gale of 1833, which was so severely felt at Hidgellee, a distance of only 75 miles, did not extend here.

The soil in the neighborhood of Balasore is of a mixed kind, composed principally of sand and light clay; to the southward it improves considerably, and in many places a fine alluvial soil is found. The whole country, from the foot of the hills to the sea, is a dead flat, and in many places below the level of it, particularly the land on the left bank of the Borabulung river, which is many feet below that on which Balasore stands; the soil is also quite different, the former being a pale white sandy clay, the latter a reddish loam at a few feet below the surface. The natives have a tradition that in the next gale which occurs, the sea will make a breach over Balasore, and go to the foot of the hills; there is certainly nothing to prevent its doing so, and only requires the wind to blow sufficiently long from the north-east or east. The country about Balasore presents rather a curious appearance from the great number and size of white-ant hills in every direction, some bare, others covered with jungle.

The vegetable products are, rice, wheat, barley, khali, cotton, tobacco, sugarcane, and the various kinds of pulse, mussallah, and vegetables used by the natives for food. Rice is the great product throughout the district; two crops are generally raised; the first, called "aus dhan," is an early crop, and cultivated on lands not likely to be flooded; it is sown in June, and reaped in August and September—the second and largest crop, called "sareed," is sown from the 15th to 30th June on the plains, and requires a low, wet soil: it is reaped in December and January. The land is ploughed from two to six times, according to the nature of the soil; a little manure, consisting of ashes and mud taken from the bed of a tank, is scattered over the ground before ploughing. When the plant has risen eight or ten inches out of the ground, the whole is ploughed up to free it from weeds; the former quickly again takes root, while the latter die. This extraordinary weeding process takes place only when the fields are flooded. As soon as the grain is nearly ripe, a bamboo is passed over it, and lays it almost level with the ground; this is done, I believe, with a view of sheltering it from the wind, and preventing the grain falling out; it also enables the laborer to cut it more easily. The rice is all stacked, and remains until it can be beaten out by women, or trodden out by oxen. The grain is dried in the sun and put into large baskets (plastered with clay and cow dung) raised from the ground; it is invariably kept in the husk until it is required for use, or the market, when it is cleaned by women with a large kind of wooden hammer called a dhenki. Three women can clean 20 seers in a day, for which they receive three seers or an equivalent in money. Twenty seers of rice in the husk yield about eight seers of clean grain; it is eaten by the natives parched, boiled, or made into sweetmeats with sugar, ghee, &c. The price of rice varies from 20 to 60 seers the rupee. The straw is either given to bullocks or used for thatching. Rice keeps good for four or five years, but it is frequently hoarded for eight and ten, when it becomes very inferior, has a most disagreeable smell, and is said to cause bowel complaints. The district produces much more than is consumed in it; if the season has been a favorable one, several laks of maunds are exported.

Wheat and barley are grown principally in the southern parts of the district, and that only in small quantities; the former is of a very fine description, and sells for about 15 or 16 seers a rupee.

The cultivation of cotton has very much decreased within a few years, and what is grown, is principally for the farmer's own use; the same may be said of tobacco, which is imported cheaper, and better than can be raised. Wherever the soil is rich enough, the sugarcane is grown; very little care, however, is taken in its cultivation, and much improvement might, no doubt, be made in the manufacture. The cane appears healthy and juicy. The mode of extracting the juice is both rude and dirty. Two wooden rollers are employed for expressing it, and the juice, after running through a drain in the earth, is received into filthy pans in which it is boiled; the "gour" or boiled juice is generally disposed of to merchants, who purify and sell it again at a considerable profit.

There is very little oil made in the district, and what is, is consumed by the natives mixed with their food, or used for anointing their bodies. Mustard and castor oil are the principal. About 3000 maunds of seeds are imported yearly for the manufacture of oil, which is very dear. The quantity of indigo grown is small, the average cultivation being only about 4000 bigahs, yielding a fair produce of tolerable quality, equal to the Tirhoot indigo, but somewhat inferior to that of Jessore. The plant is raised principally on the banks of the Subunrekah river; the soil throughout the district is favorable to the growth of the plant, and I have no doubt the manufacture might be increased with every prospect of success.

[To be continued.]

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## THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, MAY 21, 1845.

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**Massachusetts Medical Society.—By referring to the advertising sheet, the particulars of the next anniversary of the Massachusetts Medical Society may be found. Dr. Walker, of Charlestown, is to be the orator, and therefore something is anticipated a little out of the common order. It is not to be concealed, that some of the annual discourses before the Society,**

have been far from partaking of that elevated character which the members had a right to expect. Not knowing Dr. Walker's topic, we shall not attempt to guess at the nature of his discourse; but his reputation for energy of thought, boldness and originality in discussion before the Society and the Council, in past seasons, has raised the expectations of gentlemen to the opinion that the speaker will stir the elements this time.

No festival in the Union brings together such a galaxy of medical talent, as this annual meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society. Strangers of distinction usually honor the occasion with their presence, and we can assure the profession in other cities, that no better or happier period could be selected for visiting the ancient metropolis of New England, than the coming anniversary.—The members are referred to an invitation, in a preceding page of to-day's Journal, to visit the cabinet of the Society for Medical Improvement.

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*Medical Studies in Vienna and the United States.*—Last week a second letter from our pleasant neighbor, Dr. Dix, was published in the Journal, and must have been read with interest, we suppose, by all medical gentlemen. No short method of becoming qualified for medical practice, is acknowledged in Austria, if known. Four years of study are positively necessary to procure a degree—and to be elevated to a surgeon's standing, two more, making six in all.

Notwithstanding the real advantages accruing to a country from the profession of medicine, and especially from a learned body of physicians, we are satisfied that it will require half a century more among us to oblige students to be much more thorough in their studies than they now are. Within a year or two, a correspondent argued, quite satisfactorily, that the people in the United States will not wait for the completion of such a kind of medical education as the law and society require in England, France or Germany. First, as far as practicable, students qualify themselves, in the United States, to pass an examination, and the profession is mainly studied in after life. Abroad, the reading and storing the mind with the science is first accomplished, and experience follows, as clinical opportunities present. Were the European system adopted here, and it were a penal offence to practise without bringing before the people a certificate of having gone through the tedious labor of six years in actual literary preparation to prescribe medicine, the public voice would in all probability be heard, from Maine to Georgia, condemning the measure as both arbitrary and inexpedient. Besides, the country demands the services of medical graduates as soon as possible, since there must, oftentimes, be either young and imperfectly educated practitioners in the new settlements, or none at all. Thus, the schools have actually been obliged to adapt themselves to the times. This explains the reason why a short period is fixed upon, instead of a long one, to study medicine. However much this state of things may be deplored, the natural tendency of the multiplication of physicians is to raise the standard of study. When the people, too, have increased in number in a corresponding ratio, then the colleges will indicate their wishes, and oblige the students to remain longer and to be vastly more thorough in their preparation for business. Neither legislation, nor the fulminating acts of Societies, will have much influence in compelling candidates for medical honors to stay a day longer over their books, than they now do, till their services are less in demand, and then the years of their preparation may be doubled. Old countries have advantages of great importance to humanity, the origin and perpetuity of which depend on the masses of mankind—in other words, on a dense population. We must become old as a nation before we can become greatly wise, or learned, or brilliant. Competition alone leads to very high attainments in medical science. A thinly inhabited country is in no condition to raise up shining lights in any department of knowledge; but a dense population calls out the highest powers of the intellect.

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*The Surgeon General's Report.*—The Report of the Surgeon General of the U. S. Army, for the last year, which has not till now come under our observation, exhibits the state of health among the troops at the different military posts, and also shows the progress which has been made in the system of meteorological observations which Dr. Lawson has labored to introduce. A table of mean temperatures of the military posts of the United States, from the observations made by the officers of the medical staff, has been arranged by Assistant Surgeon W. H. Van Buren, under the direction of the Surgeon General, which is of much interest and value. We copy the statistics relating to the sickness in the army during the year, to November last.

"The number of officers and men remaining on the sick report on the 30th of September, 1843, was 726, and the number of cases of indisposition which have occurred since that period, is 20,982—making, in all, 21,708 cases that have been under medical treatment within the last 12 months.

"Of the whole number of sick, 20,760 have been restored to duty, 15 are on furlough, 208 have been discharged the service, 9 have deserted, and 96 have died—leaving, on the 30th of September, 620 still on the sick report.

"As the mean strength of the army for the last 12 months was, according to the monthly returns on file in the Adjutant General's office, about 8,600, and the number of cases of sickness reported by the medical officers during the same period was 20,982, with an aggregate loss by deaths of 96, it will appear that the proportion of cases of indisposition to the number of officers and men in service was as 2.44 to 1—or that, on the average, each man was sick 2.44 times during the year; that the ratio of deaths to the number of men was as 1 to 89.58, or 1.04 per cent.; and the proportion of deaths to the number of cases treated, as 1 to 226.12, or 0.44 per cent."

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*Esquirol on Mental Maladies.*—E. K. Hunt, M.D., of Hartford, Conn., has given the public a translation of Esquirol's Treatise on Insanity, a work of peculiar value. No man in Europe has a higher reputation in the management of lunatics than the celebrated Physician of the *Maison Royale des Alienés de Charanton*. Dr. Hunt says that he "has made the translation with the intent to furnish to the public and the profession, a faithful and accurate rendering into our own language, of the opinions, sentiments and practice of one who has no superior in the department to which he has devoted his life." All comments would be quite useless in regard to this admirable production, since the reputation of the author is universal. Dr. Hunt will have the thanks of his brethren for having accomplished a translation so useful and important as this must be to those at all interested in the sufferings of the insane. The leading articles are, *insanity; hallucination; illusions of the insane; fury; mental alienation; epilepsy; critical terminations of insanity; hyperæmia; demonomania; suicide; monomania; mania; dementia and idiocy.*—To be found in Boston at Ticknor & Co.'s.

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*Artificial Incubation.*—Since the public exhibition in Boston, of the *eccalobeon*, a gentleman, who has a love for philosophical pursuits, has been experimenting with the machine, and his experience warrants him in assuring us that its economical powers are vastly over-rated. He cannot calculate upon much more than five chickens in a hundred eggs submitted to the artificial process. This small number invariably leave the shell on the 19th day, instead of the 21st, according to the known law of incubation with domestic fowls. Ninety-five per cent. therefore, are a dead loss. The young chicks are well formed, but seem to lack physical ability to force themselves from the shell. If opened for them at that juncture, they begin to show faint signs of life, but die within a few minutes. He believes, therefore, that the eccalobeon does not answer the expectations of the purchaser; and never has, under the most favorable circumstances, yielded more than five or six per cent. Either some essential part of the artificial method is kept back from those who have bought the right of using it, or the fact of the general failure to compete with nature, has not been honestly acknowledged. If any of our comparative anatomists or other scientific correspondents can explain this matter, they are invited to do so.

*Boston Society of Natural History.*—This association, principally made up of physicians, is achieving wonders. The anniversary meeting, on Wednesday last, was honored with the presence of Ex-president Adams and other gentlemen of distinction. Rev. Charles Brook gave an old discourse, which was about as good as a new one. Certainly is has lost nothing by age.

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*Army Medical Intelligence.*—Head Quarters of the Army, Feb. 8th, 1845. Assistant Surgeon W. Levely ordered to Fort Washita, Ark., to relieve Assistant Surgeon J. Simons, who joins 4th Infantry at camp near Natchitoches.

April 14th, 1845. Assistant Surgeon C. C. Keeny (lately commissioned) ordered to Fort Wilkins, Coppermine Harbor, Lake Superior, to relieve Assistant Surgeon C. E. Isaacs, who awaits orders in New York city.

April 17th, 1845. Assistant Surgeon C. M. Hitchcock ordered from Military Academy, West Point, to Augusta Arsenal, Ga., to relieve Assistant Surgeon H. H. Steiner, who is ordered to Key West to relieve Assistant Surgeon C. McCormick, ordered to New Orleans station.

A Medical Board for the examination of candidates for appointment in the medical staff has been detailed, consisting of Surgeon T. G. Mower, President, Surgeon H. A. Stinnecke and Assistant Surgeon Thomas Henderson members, to convene in the city of New York, on the 1st of July, prox. The order, however, has not yet been issued.

*The late Dr. Buck.*—Dr. Marcus C. Buck's death, on Thursday the 8th inst., of apoplexy, was noticed last week. He was Military Storekeeper, at the Washington Arsenal, formerly a member of the medical staff of the army, and at the time of his death was Secretary of the Medical Department of the National Institute. His age was about 56.

*Medical Miscellany.*—Dr. Luzenburg lately extirpated the parotid gland, successfully, at New Orleans.—Dr Robert Arthur, a dentist, of Philadelphia, is preparing a treatise on the diseases and treatment of the teeth.—The legislature of Ohio have granted a charter for a dental college, to be located in Cincinnati.—That dental dreamer, Caldwell, is trying to bring into existence, again, the imaginary *ligamentum dentis*—out of which he would like to make a fortune.—The plague was making sad destruction of life at Caubool, East Indies, at the last dates.—Dr. Bryan R. Young, of Hardin, Ky., is a candidate for Congress. Dr. R. C. Palmer, of Washington, was first selected, but on account of the sickness of his lady, declined the honor.—Four boys, who have long been celebrated subjects, by whom the truths of phreno-magnetism were established, in London, recently confessed themselves impostors, to Dr. Leitch, and declared that all they had done or suffered, was a trick, the result of long practice!—The geological cabinet, belonging to the State of Pennsylvania, was lost in the great Pittsburgh fire.—A destructive fever was prevailing at Tobago, very recently.—One Conchman, a grave, cunning impostor, is reaping a rich harvest of cash, in England, by pretending to cure all kinds of diseases.—Dr. G. Thompson is a candidate for Congress from Fort Wayne district, Indiana.

To Correspondents.—A communication, under the signature of "Consistency," suggesting that "a few bottles of good wine be placed on the dinner table of the Massachusetts Medical Society" on Wednesday next, that they "would not be unacceptable to many of the brethren," and urging reasons why this should be done, was received too late for insertion in to-day's Journal. As our next No. will be too late for its publication, the writer must rest satisfied with the present notice of his suggestion.—Dr. Holt's "Observations on Neuralgia" will appear next week.

Married,—James M. Smith, M.D., of Springfield, Mass., to Miss J. T. Sherman.—At Washington, D. C., Dr. Geo. Clymer, of the Navy, to Miss M. Shubrick, daughter of Commodore Shubrick.

Died,—At Bradford, Mass., Dr. Benj. Parker, 85.—At Detroit, Michigan, Dr. A. L. Porter.—At New York, Dr. David L. Millison, of a disease of the heart, 40. —At Paris, on the 11th of March, Ollivier D'Angers, aged 49 years, a member of the Royal Academy of Medicine, and of the council of health; and the principal editor of the Annales d'Hygiene Publique et de Medicine Legale. On the 21st Feb., at the advanced age of nearly 80 years, M. Ribes, ex-surgeon of the Hotel des Invalides, and one of the oldest surgeons of the Imperial Army.

Number of deaths in Boston, for the week ending May, 17, 46—Males, 20; Females, 26. Stillborn, 3. Of consumption, 8—rheumatic fever, 2—dropsy in the chest, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 2—bilious fever, 1—child-bed, 1—marasmus, 2—scarlet fever, 6—old age, 1—inflammation on the brain, 2—croup, 2—lung fever, 3—hooping cough, 2—typhus fever, 1—infantile, 3—disease of heart, 1—dropsy, 2—syphilis, 1—teething, 2—inflammation of the stomach, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—tumor, 1.
Under 5 years, 21—between 5 and 20 years, 6—between 20 and 60 years, 16—over 60 years, 3.

*Health of New Orleans.*—The city has continued quite healthy since our last date. There has been a continuance of the same diseases as noted in our last No., viz., pneumonia, catarrh, rheumatism, bowel complaints, erysipelas, measles, scarlatina, &c., but none of them have prevailed to an extent to be called epidemic. The weather continued cool unusually late, and for the most part dry. Fires were not generally dispensed with until about the 10th of April, since which time it has turned warm rapidly, and the shady sides of the streets are sought with avidity, to avoid the oppressive rays of the sun. Since the weather has become so much warmer, we find bowel complaints more common among those exposed. The river from the 10th of March to the 10th of April was very high for the season, and our cross streets were well watered by means of the culverts through the levee. The water was only about 2 1-2 feet below the highest stage of last year. This rise proceeded from the Ohio, Cumberland, and Tennessee rivers; it was of but short duration, and has already passed almost entirely off. As a conjunction between the annual rising of the rivers on the Eastern and Western sides of the Mississippi has not taken place, there are now no apprehensions of an overflow this year. The rise of the upper Western rivers does not usually occur until June. The Mississippi at this place is again so low that an extensive batture is exposed, from which arise very offensive exhalations, and as the supply from the river is cut off, the stagnant waters in the gutters at the back part of the city are likewise very noisome. All these circumstances combined, induce many croakers to forebode a sickly season, but this is the old cry that may be heard every spring. We do not believe that any certain calculation can be made in regard to a future epidemic, or that the opinions of any in regard to it are of much value. We know really nothing of the remote cause of our autumnal fevers, nor the laws that govern it. What we call *malaria* is altogether a hypothetical agent, imperceptible, and appreciable only by it effects. These we have learned to prevent, in a measure, by means of cleanliness and free ventilation; or to avoid, by removing afar from the scenes where they prevail. But the great business of the physician is to defend the human constitution, and to aid the system in resisting these baneful influences. This being the alternate year in which yellow fever has usually prevailed for a period of about twenty years past, renders it quite probable that we may have another epidemic; and this single fact is of more importance than all the calculations that may be made from the state of the river, or weather, or the condition of the streets, put together. It is worthy of remark, however, that the general health of New Orleans has greatly improved within four years past. The oldest practitioners concur in the opinion that there is nothing like the amount of sickness in the city during the healthy seasons, that there was eight or ten years ago. Whether this is merely one of those remissions or exemptions that have occurred previously for similar periods, or a permanent hygienic amelioration arising from paving the streets, greater attention to cleanliness, &c., time alone will determine. There is doubtless still great room for improvement, in the condition of our city, and we are pleased to see that the proper authorities are devoting to the subject the attention it deserves. An important duty devolves upon the Board of Health; they are the special guardians of the health of the community, and should promptly point out all sources of disease.—*New Orleans Medical Journal.*